

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA



TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) STATE PLAN RENEWAL

October 1, 2015 - September 30, 2017

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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**South Carolina
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
State Plan Renewal**

1.0 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE FAMILY INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM

1.1 The Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Program

The four purposes of the TANF Program are to:

- (1) provide assistance to "needy" families so children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives;
- (2) end the dependence of "needy" parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage;
- (3) prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and
- (4) encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

1.2 Definitions of Assistance

The following TANF benefits are defined as assistance:

- (1) Family Independence monthly check or stipend;
- (2) Family Cap Voucher;
- (3) Support Services for *unemployed* families;
- (4) Work Experience Training Allowance.

The following TANF benefits are *not* defined as assistance:

- (1) Nonrecurring short-term benefits designed to deal with a specific crisis situation or episode of need, not intended to meet ongoing needs and that will not extend beyond four months;
- (2) Support services to *employed* families;
- (3) Refundable earned income tax credits; and
- (4) Transportation provided under a Job Access/Reverse Commute Project provided to an individual who is not otherwise receiving assistance.

1.3 State Welfare Policy

The State conducts a TANF program, known as Family Independence (FI) in South Carolina that provides assistance to needy families with children and provides parents or caretaker relatives with job preparation, work, and support services to enable them to leave the program and become self-reliant. It is the policy of the State of South Carolina that personal responsibility and parental responsibility must exist if citizens are to attain independence. The welfare system is based upon a reciprocal agreement between TANF/FI recipients and taxpayers because it is to the benefit of the citizens of the State to transition recipients from welfare to work. The State will temporarily support needy parents if they will undertake appropriate steps to attain employment and self-reliance. Family Independence assists families to become economically independent, provides tools to achieve and maintain self-reliance, and deters abuse of the system through fair and meaningful sanctions.

1.4 Program Objectives

- (1) To support family life by paying a monthly benefit, providing support services, education, job training and job placement and promoting continued employment with increasing income until the family's total financial resources rise above the eligibility level for public benefits.
- (2) To achieve long term improvement in family functioning through collaboration and mutual planning with families.
- (3) To ensure a well-coordinated service delivery system to assess multiple barriers to employment and provide treatment, training, education and job placement services.
- (4) To advance economic independence and support stable families by providing preventive services such as after school activities, home visitation programs, and counseling and treatment services.
- (5) To prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies by providing teen pregnancy prevention programs and family planning activities.
- (6) To encourage the formation and maintenance of two parent families through educational initiatives and marriage friendly agency policies.
- (7) To support children and two parent families by offering child support services and encouraging father involvement.

- (8) To support and stabilize families of children with caretaker relatives by providing counseling, child care and support services to the caretaker relatives in child only cases.
- (9) To encourage individual responsibility by providing the tools to achieve and maintain self-reliance and deter abuse of the FI system through the imposition of fair and meaningful sanctions.
- (10) To promote self-esteem, self-dignity, and self-worth of the FI recipients through maximizing employment opportunities within the State and through the development of entrepreneurial and job opportunities in conjunction with the private business community.
- (11) To provide employment retention and advancement activities to employed clients to enhance job skills and promote career advancement.
- (12) To provide emergency assistance to or on behalf of needy children under age 18 and other family members where the children are the subject of abuse or neglect or have been in substitute care and can be reunited with their families.
- (13) To ensure that families that are not eligible for FI payments or who are no longer receiving assistance are aware of, and have access to, all benefits available to them.
- (14) To evaluate the status of current and former Family Independence recipients by collecting data to assess program quality and outcomes for children and their families.

1.5 Public Involvement

In order to inform both public agencies and private sector organizations, a Notice of Public Interest was published on the South Carolina Department of Social Services website (<https://dss.sc.gov>) stating the availability of the South Carolina Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) State Plan. Interested parties were notified the draft TANF State Plan, which provides for cash assistance and support services for the Family Independence Program (formerly AFDC), is being made available for public review and comment. The public comment period complies with the provisions of Public Law 104-193, Section 402(a)(4)(B), dated August 22, 1996. Interested parties were notified that copies of the plan would be made available to them by contacting the Department of Social Services, Economic Services Policy and Workflow Division, P.O. Box 1520, Columbia, SC

29202-1520, (803) 898-0990 and that comments must be made within 45 days, in writing, to Ms. Sandra Allen, Division Director, at the above address.

In addition, the text of this document was made available on the same website at <https://dss.sc.gov>.

1.6 TANF Benefit Restrictions

The Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (P. L. 112-96) requires SC to maintain policies to prevent TANF families from accessing or using their benefits in any liquor store; casino, gambling casino, or gaming establishment; or any retail establishment that provides adult-oriented entertainment in which performers disrobe or perform in an unclothed state for entertainment.

1.6.1 TANF Benefits

South Carolina provides TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) benefits through three methods:

1. paper checks – for recipients who have demonstrated electronic card misuse or recipients without the appropriate demographic information to establish a bank account ;
2. deposit into a debit account with a branded MasterCard (ePay);
3. direct deposit into a personal account by state procedure, limited to non-parents with custody of the TANF eligible child(ren).

South Carolina does not use Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) for cash programs.

FI recipient payments delivered electronically to debit accounts, called ePay, are set up by a contracted vendor. The only funds deposited in the account are those issued by SC DSS and can be accessed only by the debit card. ePay accounts are governed by FDIC regulations. In SC, any TANF recipient, without the appropriate demographic information, will receive benefits in the form of a paper check.

Instructional material and information regarding the ePay cards, TANF restrictions, benefit access, customer service, etc., are issued, upon approval, to recipients in a cardholder “Welcome Packet” by our contractor.

1.6.2 Benefit Access and Fee Information

A. SC recipients receive information on how to access the benefits without paying fees as well as applicable fees and surcharge information. The recipient is free to choose the most advantageous and safest method to access his/her benefits. Access to benefits is not limited to locations at which cash is provided. Recipients may access benefits at automated teller machines (ATM) or use Point-of-Sale (POS) devices to make purchases at locations that accept MasterCard. Recipients have free access when the

ePay card is used in transactions at U. S. merchants and retailers or when they receive cash back with a purchase. POS transactions allow “cash-back” options at no additional charge.

B. Recipients are allowed free, teller-assisted “over the counter” cash transactions at any bank or credit union that accepts MasterCard for the dollar amount of the recipient’s choosing. Recipients are allowed two (2) ATM cash withdrawals for no fee per month at MoneyPass® ATMs. A \$1.50 fee will be assessed for each additional ATM withdrawal. Out-of-Network ATM withdrawals will also assess \$1.50 fee for withdrawals not conducted at MoneyPass® ATMs. ATM owners and operators may charge an additional fee called “surcharge” or “convenience fee” to use their ATM. DSS state office staff review the fees charged monthly in order to monitor and evaluate the utilization of the funds. The ePay card can be used for electronic bill paying via the internet.

1.6.3 State Compliance

- A. South Carolina State Regulation 114-1150 – Determination of Benefits – provides the TANF benefit restrictions. 114-1150(F) states that Family Independence payments are not to be accessed, by electronic transaction using a Point-of Sale device, ATM, or access to an online system for the withdrawal of funds or the processing of a payment for merchandise or a service, at any of the following locations:
 - i. A liquor store. A liquor store means any retail establishment which sells exclusively or primarily intoxicating liquor. Such term does not include a grocery store which sells both intoxicating liquor and groceries including staple foods (within the meaning of section 3(r) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008(7U.S.C. 2012(r)).
 - ii. A casino, gambling casino or gaming establishment.
 - iii. An adult oriented entertainment establishment which is defined as a retail establishment that provides adult-oriented entertainment in which performers disrobe or perform in an unclothed state for entertainment are prohibited.
- B. Merchant Category Code blocks were placed on the SC ePay cards to prevent the use of the ePay cards at the retailer types listed below:
 - i. Package Stores/Beer/Wine/Liquor
 - ii. Betting/Track/Casino/Lotto
- C. SC DSS provides information to new ePay TANF clients which give details on how to access TANF benefits and restrictions described in 1.6.
- D. SC DSS includes TANF restrictions in written notices sent at initial approval and at annual redetermination.

- E. Posters with restrictions have been distributed to all 46 county offices and provided to partners contracted by DSS to serve our TANF population.
- F. SC DSS has placed the restriction information on the DSS webpage; www.dss.sc.gov

South Carolina does not allow the operation of casinos within its borders, nor does the one federally recognized Indian tribe in South Carolina operate a casino on tribal land. Adult entertainment businesses are not regulated by state licensing or local regulations, nor are there unique Merchant Classification Codes for adult entertainment businesses. Local governments default to local ordinances for nuisance businesses (e.g., tattoo shops, chicken or pig operations, etc.), if there are issues relating to a local business. The MCC used by some of these businesses is the same as can be used by theaters or museums (i.e., entertainment or education). SC DSS continues to seek avenues to address this unregulated group.

1.6.4 Penalties

South Carolina State Regulation 114-1140 Q(1)(c)(iv) has been revised to state that DSS will recover an overpayment from any assistance unit of which an adult member accessed all or part of their monthly payment at a liquor store, casino, gambling casino or gaming establishment or an adult-oriented entertainment establishment. If TANF benefits are used at such locations, the transaction amount is considered an overpayment and a claim must be established against the household and the claim investigated by DSS Benefit Integrity staff. Overpayment means a financial assistance payment received by or for an assistance unit for the payment month exceeds the amount for which the unit was eligible. The Benefit Integrity staff work in concert with the DSS Law Enforcement agents to obtain required bank transaction records to establish the claim. DSS has uniform statewide procedures for recovery of overpayments of assistance.

2.0 ADMINISTRATION

2.1 Structure

SCDSS is a cabinet level department under the Governor's Office. The State Director, who is appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Senate, has direct line supervision over the forty-six County Directors who administer the program.

2.2 Role of Public and Private Contractors

Family Independence is an interagency partnership between SCDSS and many other State government agencies. This partnership facilitates the ongoing coordination and collaboration that are essential to the planning and provision of

services designed to meet the human service, employment and training, and educational needs of the Family Independence clients. SCDSS is also a partner with other public and private organizations that share in the TANF mission. These partners include service providers, community action agencies, the business community, local advisory committees and the faith community. Contracts are in place and others will be established with public and private entities to provide pregnancy prevention services, after school activities, home visitation services, and other prevention activities that promote safe and stable families.

Currently, coordinated memorandums of understanding ensure that Family Independence staff understands the type of services offered so that appropriate referral will be made on behalf of the client. These agreements include, but are not limited to, those with the Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services, Department of Health and Environmental Control, Department of Commerce, Commission on Higher Education, Department of Education (inclusive of local school districts), Department of Mental Health, South Carolina Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, and the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education.

2.3 Indian Tribes

Indians living in the State who are tribal members will be treated as residents of the State and are subject to the same eligibility criteria as any other resident.

2.4 Statewideness

The State will conduct the Family Independence Program, designed to serve all political subdivisions in the State (not necessarily in a uniform manner) to provide assistance and/or services to needy families with children, in all 46 counties of South Carolina. Activities of these offices related to the Family Independence program include: accepting and processing applications for assistance, conducting reviews and redeterminations of eligibility and managing a program of work activities and requirements.

2.4.1 Program Requirements

Program operating guidelines which include all policies, procedures, etc., for the determination of initial and continued eligibility will be issued to the county offices by DSS State Office as needed. Such operating guidelines contained in department program manuals or other correspondence is binding on the county offices. Financial thresholds are provided in Attachment A.

Eligibility rules of the Department of Social Services will be uniformly applied in all cases in a county. The determination of need and amount of assistance for all applicants and recipients will be made on an objective and equitable basis and all types of income and potential income will be taken into consideration in the same

way except where otherwise specifically authorized by State or Federal law or as stated in program operating guidelines issued by the State Department of Social Services.

To be eligible for Family Independence cash assistance a family must meet the following conditions:

1. Be a U.S. citizens or meet certain alien requirements outlined in the Family Independence Manual, Chapter 4
2. Be residents of South Carolina
3. Be in need according to agency financial standards, see Attachment A
4. The adult/teen parent must be related, within a specified degree, to a dependent child(ren) under the age of 18 living in the household
5. The value of countable resources owned by the family must not exceed the limit of \$2,500.00
6. Cooperate in self-sufficiency requirements including work and child support enforcement activities unless deferred from work requirements or unless good cause exists not to cooperate with child support, if applicable
7. Provide or apply for a SSN for each member of the assistance unit
8. Must not be participating in a strike
9. Complete applicant initial job search, if applicable

2.5 Services to Families Who Move into South Carolina

Families who move into the State from another state will have their eligibility determined under the program requirements of the Family Independence Program (South Carolina will not apply standards from the applicants' previous state of residence).

Note: Months of TANF benefits received in another state will be identified and counted against the federal five-year limit.

3.0 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Family Independence Program is built around two primary components, set forth below:

(1) Work Program & Self-Reliance

The program provides temporary financial assistance and work training and education programs that lead to individuals' social and economic independence.

(2) Prevention Programs

Prevention programs focus on (a) teen pregnancy prevention, (b) strengthening and maintaining intact families, (c) assisting in the reunification of troubled families, and (d) providing short-term services and

resources to resolve crisis situations that might result in welfare dependency.

3.1 Work Program and Self-Reliance

South Carolina will refer work eligible individuals receiving assistance to a FI work program case manager for development of the FI Family plan. The Family plan outlines the overall strengths and growth areas within the family and actions necessary to achieve self-reliance. The assessment process involves gathering and analyzing information on external and internal factors that affect the client to determine the current level of employability and work readiness. Assessments include screenings to identify potential barriers that may affect the client's ability to participate in work or work-related activities. Screening results may be used to refer to local service providers or qualified specialists who will provide assistance to minimize barriers such as substance abuse, physical or learning disabilities, domestic violence and other impediments to employment.

SC DSS will require each work eligible individual sign an Individual Employment Plan (IEP). The IEP is an agreement between the recipient and SCDSS that describes the actions necessary to fulfill the vocational goals and time frames for completing those actions. Each work eligible individual will be placed in work-related activities consistent with his/her skills, education, experience and competence. Work activities may include: employment, on-the-job-training, job search, job readiness activities, work experience, community service programs, vocational educational activities, job skills training or educational activities. Those caretaker relative families identified as "Child-Only" will not be required to participate in Jobs Upfront Mean More Pay (JUMMP) or the FI Work Program as they are exempt from work requirements and will not require an Individual Employment Plan.

SCDSS also develops a Family Plan for the entire family that delineates the role of each person within the family and sets forth steps that they can take to attain a higher level of individual functioning.

SC DSS currently does not have a plan to assist individuals in training for, seeking and maintaining employment in the eldercare workforce as outlined in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010.

3.1.1 Job Search Requirement as a Condition of Eligibility

SCDSS will require FI applicants, identified as work-eligible, be referred to private entities contracted with the agency. Applicants who meet the criteria outlined in Section 2.4 #1 of the Family Independence Manual are exempt from the initial job search requirement.

The Jobs Upfront Mean More Pay (JUMMP) program contractors will provide immediate and on-going services to mandatory applicants and recipients that will assist in finding paid employment. As a condition of eligibility, referred applicants will be required to attend orientation, sign an Individual Employment Plan and participate in work and work-related activities such as assessment, employment, employability planning and job search for a 3-week period prior to approval of FI benefits. After the initial compliance period, to retain eligibility for cash benefits, the contractor is expected to ensure that the participant continues to meet work-related goals by participating in work activities that include unsubsidized employment, short term employment try-outs, on-the-job training, vocational educational training, job skills training, education directly related to employment or satisfactory attendance in secondary school. FI recipients will continue to participate in the JUMMP program up to 60 days after approval of benefits. The JUMMP contract does not require case managers utilize or place participants in community service employment. When the 90 days of JUMMP involvement ends, Individuals are referred to the case manager in the county of residence who will begin to monitor the individual's participation in work or work-related activities which include community service placements.

Applicants considered young custodial parents (YCP) are not referred to JUMMP but are required to conduct an initial job search as a condition of FI eligibility. County staff will provide job search information during the initial interview with the YCP applicant. Young custodial parents:

- are between the ages of 18-25;
- do not have a high school diploma, GED or certificate of completion; and
- have a child under the age of 12 months.

The YCP must make and document a minimum of five employer contacts during the application process. It is recommended that the search be completed within two weeks. Failure to complete the job search without good cause (good cause reasons are those generally considered to be beyond the control of the applicant) will result in denial of the application.

3.1.2 Family Independence Child Care and Support Services

SC DSS is committed to providing support services for clients based on individual needs. Child care and support services are available to assist an applicant of the FI program in order for them to conduct the initial job search, participate in approved job preparation activities, and obtain or maintain employment.

Also, clients participating in an approved educational or training activity, or who have become employed may receive support services. Support services include, but are not limited to, child care, transportation, prescription eyeglasses, physical exams, automobile repairs/car expenses, parenting programs, safety equipment, criminal records checks, and relocation assistance. Support services include coordination with other agencies for services such as alcohol and drug counseling, health services (non-medical treatment), housing services, vocational

rehabilitation, mental health services and referral services, at no cost to the agency.

To allow parents to go to work, the State will provide reimbursement for child care pursuant to the state plan for the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), including the principle that parents will have the right to choose the child care arrangement that best meets the needs of their children. Under the CCDF plan, the State may provide funds for care by providers who meet the State's child daycare regulatory requirements or for qualifying self-arranged informal child care.

The State has established criteria, procedures, and definitions for determining whether a parent is unable to obtain needed child care so that a parent's failure to work or attend training on that basis may be addressed.

3.1.3 Participation in an Employment Preparation Program

As part of the program's requirements, each adult and minor parent recipient determined by the case manager to be in need of Employment Skills Training must participate in an Employment Preparation Program. The program includes, but is not limited to, job readiness training and supervised job search. Also, the program may include an alcohol or other drug assessment as appropriate.

3.1.4 Employment Retention and Advancement

The Family Independence Program emphasizes pre-employment job keeping skills and offers post-employment services designed to ensure continuous attachment to the labor force. In order to foster employment stability, transitional services such as child care are provided. Other retention services may be offered including intensive case management, follow-up contacts and home visits, referrals to community resources, banking and financial management, and re-employment assistance. Special services and resources may be offered to employed clients to assist in their job progression and career advancement such as employment counseling, access to job leads and skill enhancement training.

3.1.5 Transitional Child Care

Transitional child care will be provided, based on available funding, for up to 24 months to individuals who meet the following eligibility criteria:

- (1) FI recipients who no longer receive a cash payment due to loss or declination of earned income disregards or increased earnings.
- (2) FI recipients who formerly received a cash payment and who were employed at the time their case was closed.

- (3) FI recipients who formerly received a cash payment and whose cash payments were terminated due to the 24-month time limit expiration; who become employed and (a) request assistance within 24 months from FI case closure and (b) whose income did not exceed 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

Eligibility will cease if any of the following occurs:

- (1) The recipient no longer has a dependent child in the home.
- (2) Employment ends (a 30-day interruption to go from one job to another job will be deemed continuous employment).
- (3) The client's income exceeds 200% of the HHS Federal Poverty Guidelines.

Assistance may be provided for up to 24 months from the first month of eligibility. Sanctioned clients may qualify for transitional child care by obtaining a full-time job and "curing" the sanction.

The state will expect the parent to make a co-payment based on a sliding fee scale. Parents will have the right to choose the child care arrangement that best meets the need of their child (ren). Payments will be made to providers who meet the State's child day care regulatory requirements. Self-arranged, informal care arrangements that do not meet the State's child day care regulatory requirements will be paid for, if prescribed basic health and safety standards are met.

3.1.6 Work Program Sanction Exemptions

The recipient is exempt from the employment and training sanctions of the Individual Employment Plan if the recipient is:

- (1) The only parent in the home with a child under one year of age; however, custodial parents under age 25 who have not completed their high school education are required to comply with these provisions regardless of the age of the child;
- (2) At least six months pregnant and the pregnancy is verified by a qualified licensed health care provider;
- (3) Incapacitated and the incapacity is verified by a physician as clearly precluding the recipient from engaging in current or future gainful employment, education or training;

- (4) Caring for an incapacitated child in the home or other adult relative whose incapacity has been verified by a physician and, if SCDSS considers it necessary, confirmed by an assessment performed by the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation; or
- (5) Unable to participate because appropriate child care or reasonable transportation was not provided

3.1.7 Domestic Violence Option

SCDSS will provide waivers of certain program requirements (residency, child support, family cap, time limits and work requirements) pursuant to a determination of good cause of normal program requirements for so long as necessary in cases where compliance would make it more difficult for such individuals to escape domestic violence.

FI applicants and recipients will be screened to identify individuals with a history of domestic violence. SCDSS has contracted with domestic violence service providers to provide comprehensive training on domestic violence to all FI case managers.

Referrals to the local domestic violence agency for counseling and support services will be made upon identification of an individual with a history of domestic violence. Cases referred will be jointly staffed by SC DSS and the local domestic violence agency to develop a service plan, in conjunction with the DSS Family Plan, designed to lead to self-reliance.

3.1.8 Sanctions for Failure to Comply with Employment and Training Requirements Contained in the Individual Employment Plan

Recipients not meeting the work program exemption criteria described in 3.1.6, who fail without good cause to comply with the employment and training requirements contained in the Individual Employment Plan will be sanctioned in the following manner:

- (1) A 30-day conciliation period will be granted the recipient to discuss a failure to meet the terms of the Individual Employment Plan. During the 30-day period the recipient may (a) establish good cause for failure to meet the terms of the Individual Employment Plan, (b) agree to meet, in the future, the terms of the Individual Employment Plan, or (c) terminate the conciliation process. If at the end of the conciliation process the participant does not comply, Family Independence benefits must be terminated by imposing a full-family sanction. The recipient has the right to appeal the Department's decision to impose a sanction. At the end of the appeal period, if the Fair Hearing decision is not in the recipient's favor, all Family Independence benefits must be terminated. Benefits may be reinstated when the recipient agrees to comply according to the terms

of the agreement and demonstrates a willingness to comply by participating in the employment and training program or obtaining a full-time job for a period of 30 days.

- (2) Terminate all benefits if the recipient completes the training requirements contained in the Individual Employment Plan and then refuses an offer of employment without good cause.

3.1.9 Requirement for Treatment of Alcohol and/or Drug Abuse

SCDSS will require the following recipients of benefits to participate in an alcohol or drug treatment program approved by SC Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services (SCDAODAS) as a part of their Individual Employment Plan. If the recipient refuses, he/she is ineligible for benefits.

Family Independence recipients will be referred to SCDAODAS for clinical assessment for participation in an alcohol or drug treatment program who:

- (1) have been identified by a case manager, with concurrence from a supervisor, as possibly in need of alcohol or other drug abuse treatment services using screening indicators provided by SCDAODAS; or
- (2) have within six months prior to the date of last application for Family Independence or have subsequently been convicted of an alcohol or drug related offense; or
- (3) within six months prior to the date of last application for Family Independence or subsequently gives birth to a child who tests positive for drugs.

Determination that substance abuse treatment is necessary will be made by appropriate clinical staff approved by SCDAODAS. Such staff will also assess the participant's compliance with the treatment program using recognized methods of assessment including, but not limited to, random testing. In no instance shall failure to pass a random test by itself constitute a noncompliance with treatment. For participants who complete the approved SCDAODAS treatment program, SC DSS will monitor their compliance with the Individual Employment Plan using recognized methods of assessment including, but not limited to, random testing. Failure to pass such a random test for use of alcohol shall not constitute the basis for a sanction, but may constitute grounds for review by a clinical professional who will determine if there are additional indicators of substance abuse or grounds for resumption of treatment. SC DSS may sanction for noncompliance with the Individual Employment Plan participants who complete treatment and fail to pass a random test for use of illegal drugs.

SC DSS will keep records of an individual's alcohol and drug treatment participation confidential and will not release this information to law enforcement personnel.

3.1.10 Resource Limit

The resource limit for all liquid resources and real property, excluding homestead property, is \$2500 for applicant and recipient units.

3.1.11 Vehicles

One licensed/registered automobile per licensed driver in the benefit group (passenger car or other motor vehicle) is excluded. If a benefit group member owns a vehicle that is not licensed/registered, the equity value of this vehicle is counted against the \$2500 resource limit. A benefit group member may own more than one vehicle as long as the number of vehicles does not exceed the number of licensed drivers. The following vehicles are also excluded:

- (1) Vehicles owned by or used to transport a disabled person;
- (2) Vehicles essential to self-employment;
- (3) Income producing vehicles; and
- (4) Vehicles used as a home.

3.1.12 Earned Income Disregards

Provided the benefit group has passed the 185% gross income limit test, the State will disregard from earned income:

- (1) 50 percent of the monthly gross countable earned income of each individual whose needs are included in the budget group for the first four months in which earned income is countable. This is a onetime only disregard.
- (2) \$100 per month from gross countable income of each individual whose needs are included in the budget group, for the remaining months of eligibility after the four months in (1) above have been exhausted.

3.1.13 Earned Income of Minors

The earned income of any minor in the benefit group of an adult specified relative is excluded in the eligibility and benefit determination.

3.1.14 Interest and Dividend Income

Interest and dividend income up to \$400 per year per benefit group is disregarded in the eligibility and benefit determination.

3.1.15 Time Limits

Under State Law, a family may receive Family Independence benefits for no more than 24 months out of 120 months. The exceptions are:

- (1) An adult benefit group member is permanently or totally disabled, whether physically or mentally and the disability is expected to last 90 days or longer. The disabled are exempted under state law and are being served in a solely funded State program.
- (2) An adult benefit group member is providing full-time care for a disabled family member living in the home.
- (3) The teen parent/adult (both parents in a two parent household) of the child (ren) for whom assistance is received is a minor under the age of 18 who has not completed high school. Assistance must be provided for a period of up to 24 months after the minor parent attains the age of 18 or completes high school, whichever occurs first.
- (4) Child care or transportation is not reasonably available for participation in work requirements.
- (5) The adult caretaker relative is not the parent of the child and is not included in the FI cash benefits.
- (6) An adult benefit group member is providing a home for and caring for a child whom SCDSS has determined to be abandoned by his or her parents and for whom the alternative placement is foster care.
- (7) An adult benefit group member is involved in an approved training/education program set forth on his/her Individual Employment Plan that will not be completed by the 24th month. An extension is granted for up to six months when the training/education program has a fixed beginning and ending date and has a specific job/vocational goal. If the program has not been completed by the 30th month and satisfactory progress toward completion is being made, the County Director may grant month-to-month extensions for as long as necessary to complete the program and secure employment.
- (8) Any household that contains two parents in the benefit group, including sanctioned or disqualified parents. These clients are being served in a solely funded State program. Households that contain an SSI parent or an ineligible alien will not be considered a Two-parent household.

TANF allows for up to 20% of the FI caseload to be extended beyond the federal 60-month time limit due to hardship reasons. If one or more of the following criteria are met, an extension beyond the 60 months should be given:

- (1) A family member is a victim of domestic violence and the family member is enrolled in a program supervised by a recognized domestic violence advocate.
- (2) The family has an open case with Child Protective Services.
- (3) As a result of the Family Plan, an adult BG member is active in a recognized substance abuse treatment program.
- (4) The family has reached the federal time limit, but has not yet reached the State 24-month time limit due to months received in another state. (This is an extension reason only – if an applicant is ineligible in another state due to federal time limits, he/she must meet a SC time limit exemption to become eligible in SC.)
- (5) An adult in the BG is working a full-time job but is still eligible for an FI benefit.

3.1.16 Family Cap

SC DSS will not increase benefits to an eligible family as a result of a child born to that parent 10 or more months after the family begins to receive Family Independence benefits. This requirement does not apply if the State determines that the child was conceived as a result of rape or incest.

SC DSS may provide benefits for a child born after 10 months in the form of vouchers that may be used to pay for goods and services as determined by SC DSS, that permit the child's custodial parent to participate in education, training and employment related activities.

3.1.17 Recipients under the Age of 18 Must Attend School

Family Independence recipients under the age of 18 must be enrolled in school and maintain satisfactory attendance, as defined by the South Carolina Department of Education, as a condition of eligibility for benefits, unless they have attained a high school diploma, GED or certificate of completion.

3.1.18 Requirement to Provide Certain Information for Child Support Purposes and Sanctions for Failure to Provide It

As a condition of eligibility applicants and recipients of Family Independence must provide:

- (1) The first and last name of the absent parent and putative father and any known license(s) which might be subject to revocation; and

- (2) At least two of the following items on each absent parent and each putative father named:
 - (a) Date of birth;
 - (b) Social Security Number;
 - (c) Last known home address;
 - (d) Last known employer's name and address;
 - (e) Either of the absent parent's parent's name and address.

An applicant or recipient who fails to provide this information or who provides the names of two putative fathers, both of whom are excluded from paternity by genetic testing, is ineligible for assistance for herself and the child for whom parental information was not provided unless the applicant or recipient verifies there is good cause for not providing this information. Good cause includes, but is not limited to, documentation of incest, rape, or the existence of or the threat of physical abuse to the child or custodial parent.

When paternity is legally established for a child in sanctioned status, Family Independence benefits may be granted, if all other eligibility requirements are met.

3.1.19 Disregard of Cash Value of Life Insurance

The cash value of life insurance is disregarded for any person whose resources must be counted in determining Family Independence eligibility.

3.1.20 Confidentiality Requirements Regarding Family Independence Recipients

SC DSS restricts the use and disclosure of information about individuals and families receiving assistance in accordance with South Carolina State Regulations, Chapter 114, Article 11, Section 114.1170, Safeguarding Information. However, SC DSS may disclose confidential information to agencies and entities outside the Department, that provide services to recipients to enable them to become independent and self-reliant when SCDSS has the recipient's signed release form on file stating that he/she consents to the release of confidential information regarding his/her benefit group.

3.1.21 Reporting Requirements

Family Independence recipients shall report the following changes within ten days:

- (1) A change in the composition of the household;
- (2) A change of address;

(3) Employment status which includes obtaining a job or losing a job, hours of employment or rate of pay; or

(4) Source of income

When it is determined that a BG member temporarily living away from home will not return, the recipient must report this within five days.

Failure to report any of the above changes does not excuse the recipient from repayment of benefits in the situation where failure to report caused an overpayment of the FI benefit.

3.1.22 Citizenship and Alien Status

Applicants and recipients of FI benefits must be citizens of the United States or qualified aliens within the scope of TANF eligibility as described in Section 4.4, #3, Family Independence Policy Manual.

3.1.23 Annual Review

There will be at least one redetermination of eligibility factors every 12 months.

3.1.24 Needy Families

Family Independence benefit groups containing one or two parents or a non-parent caretaker relative may receive benefits, if financially and otherwise eligible. Income criteria is in Attachment A of this plan and the resource criteria is in Sections 3.1.10 and 3.1.11 of this plan.

3.1.25 Aliens

In addition to U.S. citizens, certain aliens who otherwise qualify may also be eligible for benefits.

The following groups of aliens may receive benefits if all other requirements are met, for up to five years from either the date the status is granted or from the date of entry:

- (1) Refugees, Asylees, Amerasians, Cuban/Haitian entrants and aliens whose deportation is withheld.
- (2) Victims of severe forms of trafficking (those forced into prostitution, slavery, or forced labor) through coercion, threats of violence, psychological abuse, torture, and imprisonment.
- (3) Aliens granted parole for at least one year under Section 212 (d)(5) of the INA, aliens battered or subjected to extreme cruelty in the U.S., and aliens granted conditional entrant refugee status before April 1, 1980.

- (4) Lawful permanent residents who have worked or can be credited with working in the United States for 40 qualifying quarters under Title II of the Social Security Act.

3.1.26 Fair Hearings

Applicants and recipients of the Family Independence Program are granted appeal rights from decisions they deem to be adverse. When a hearing is requested within ten days after the receipt of an adverse notice, the FI benefits are not continued unless the recipient specifically requests in writing that they be paid pending the hearing decision. The recipient must be informed that an adverse hearing decision will require the repayment of benefits paid pending the hearing decision. Fair hearings for FI applicants and recipients are provided for in South Carolina State Regulations, R. 114-110. The specific procedures for a Fair Hearing are found in the *South Carolina Department of Social Services Family Independence Policy Manual*, Chapter 22 - Fair Hearings.

3.1.27 Legal Basis of the Family Independence Program

The State operates the Family Independence Program under the following provisions:

- (1) Title IV-A of the Social Security Act, as amended.
- (2) Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 260-265.
- (3) South Carolina Code of Laws of 1976, Title 43, Social Services, Chapter 5, Public Aid, Assistance and Relief Generally, Articles 1, 5 and 9.
- (4) South Carolina State Regulations, Chapter 114, Article 11, Family Independence Program.
- (5) The South Carolina Department of Social Services Family Independence Policy Manual.

3.2 Prevention Programs

The State considers prevention programs to be critical in assisting families to provide safe, stable nurturing environments for their children. The following prevention programs will be funded with TANF dollars to accomplish these goals.

3.2.1 Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention

SC DSS will also contract with entities to provide Abstinence until Marriage teen pregnancy prevention programs and services within the State. The programs must

provide an abstinence first, age appropriate comprehensive approach to health and sexuality education with a goal of preventing adolescent pregnancy throughout South Carolina. An effectively implemented program should have published positive behavioral outcomes by an independent and nationally recognized private or government agency demonstrating that a year after the program, program participants initiated sex at a rate of at least thirty percent lower than comparable non-program participants. The programs implemented by the entity may not violate any portion of the South Carolina Comprehensive Health Education Act when implemented in a school setting.

3.2.2 Statutory Rape Prevention Program

SC DSS believes that as part of the educational efforts it will provide in programs designed to promote responsible fatherhood, encourage marriage, and build character and higher self-esteem, statutory rape prevention issues will be discussed and training will be provided. Family Independence workers are required to report cases of suspected abuse or neglect to the Child Welfare Division/Human Services.

SC DSS partners with the SC Center for Fathers and Families, a faith-based organization, whose mission is to develop and support a statewide infrastructure deeply invested in repairing and nurturing relationships between fathers and families. The Center for Fathers and Families works with six local fatherhood programs in 11 locations to deliver quality, father-friendly services throughout South Carolina. The program addresses ways to overcome obstacles to becoming an engaged and responsible father by focusing on a wide range of topics such as improving employment status, family relationships, effective communication, job readiness, child support and the legal system, financial management, parenting and co-parenting, healthy relationships, men's health and education

SC DSS partners with the SC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy which provides programs/trainings engages adult males and also addresses the problem of statutory rape. Programs provided by the SC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy include information regarding legal definitions and consequences of statutory rape and the SC law regarding the age of consent. Training is designed to reach state and local law enforcement officials, community educators which include teachers, coaches, nurses and other health professionals such as those providing counseling services

South Carolina Department of Social Services through its Domestic Violence and Batterers Intervention Programs provides assistance for victims, their dependents, and perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence. The goals of the Domestic Violence Programs are to prevent and/or reduce the incidence of domestic violence and ensure accessible emergency shelter and related assistance to those in need of services for the intervention and prevention of Intimate Partner Violence as well as for treatment for perpetrators. Domestic Violence Programs work with multiple government and non-government

agencies to address the serious problem of domestic violence in our state and to reduce domestic violence in South Carolina. SCDSS partners with other state agencies such as South Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (SCCADVASA), Department of Public Safety and the Department of Health and Environmental Control in an effort to develop and sustain the best methods in domestic violence prevention.

3.2.3 Emergency Assistance –Title IV-A

As permitted in Section 402(a)(2) of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, South Carolina will continue to operate an Emergency Assistance Program as it was in effect in September 30, 1995.

Emergency Assistance is available to or on behalf of a needy child under the age of 18 and any other member of the family in which he/she is living; a needy child is defined as one without resources immediately available to meet his/her needs. Migrant workers are covered on a statewide basis.

A. Kinds of Emergencies Covered:

- (1) Children who are the subject of a child abuse and/or neglect report and are at risk of removal from the home because of abuse, or neglect, or inability of parents to provide care.
- (2) Children who have been in Substitute Care less than six months and, with assistance can be reunited with their families.

B. Kinds of Assistance Provided to Meet Emergency Situations:

- (1) Shelter cost, including rent/mortgage, utilities, fuel, and home repairs.
- (2) Emergency medical care and transportation, if not provided under other programs.
- (3) Emergency care, emergency foster care, or emergency residential group care for children separated from their families, including food, clothing, and supervision, if necessary, to effect reunification.

C. Kinds of Service Provided to Meet the Emergency Situations:

- (1) Information and referral, case management, counseling and in-home family services.
- (2) Parenting education and training and incidental homemaker support services.
- (3) Child and respite care.

3.2.4 Delivery of Services to Needy Families

Services will be provided to needy families whose income is equal to or less than 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. There is no resource test in order to receive these services. Services provided in the following paragraph will meet goal one as stated in section 1.1 of this State Plan.

Services such as the following will be available; however, some of them may only be available in selected counties:

- (1) Intensive case management and treatment services for low income parents (and their children) that are in need of addiction services for alcohol or other drug abuse.
- (2) Preschool programs will be offered with services that assist parents in promoting optimal early childhood development, school readiness, and in reducing the risk of children developing major physical, developmental and learning problems. These programs will help ensure that children arrive at school ready to learn and will increase the likelihood of eventual self-reliance.
- (3) After school and summer programs will be offered to students with services that provide students with basic and remedial educational services, recreational activities, life skills classes, enhancement of self-esteem, health education and parental involvement activities.
- (4) A unified literacy program, incorporating components from early childhood education, adult literacy or adult basic education, and parenting education programs, will be made available to low income clients.

Other services to be provided include psychological evaluations, family and group counseling, casemanagement including home visitation, and community based assessment to determine the type of crisis intervention necessary to maintain the family or to expedite family reunification.

3.2.5 Prior Title IV-A and IV-F State Plans Reference Date

South Carolina has adopted the date of September 30, 1995, as the reference date for any programs currently operated that were contained in our prior-approved Title IV-A or IV-F State Plans.

3.2.6 TANF Outreach and Employment Services

In order to increase economic stability and greater levels of economic self-sufficiency, DSS provides FI outreach services that provide information about TANF and related services or programs for which low income families might be eligible, including Medicaid, SCHIP, school lunch and other benefits. Outreach

services include an informational brochure, provided to all recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) with income less than 200% of the federal poverty level.

Any SNAP custodial or non-custodial parent or responsible relative of a child may also receive employment services that include, but are not limited to the following: orientation, assessment, case management, employment plan development, barrier resolution, job search skill training, resume and soft skill development, job placement services, support services, retention and re-employment services. These services meet TANF purposes 1 and 2, and do not provide basic income support or constitute “assistance” under the Federal rules.

4.0 Program to Increase School Success

Effective October 1, 2004, the state established a segregated state program for the purpose of increasing school success. State expenditures for this program shall be countable as state Maintenance of Effort. The goal of this state-funded pre-school program is to increase the number of children who enter first grade ready to learn and thereby increase the likelihood of school success for children in needy families

Pre-school age children from families with incomes at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level are eligible for this program.

School-readiness and early school success have been shown to increase attachment to school. Attachment to school decreases the chances that teens will have out-of wedlock pregnancies and increases the likelihood that children will remain in school through graduation from high school. These outcomes meet the following TANF goals:

- End the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation and work.
- Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies.

5.0 Programs to Increase Earnings Capacity

Effective April 1, 2005 the state established a segregated state program for increasing the earning capacity of low income individuals in the State. State expenditures for this program, as well as other certified public expenditures, shall be countable as state Maintenance of Effort.

The goal of this state-funded scholarship program is to increase the number of students from low-income families that can attend college. High-school graduates from families with incomes at or below 200% of poverty are eligible for this program.

College graduates are more likely to achieve success in employment, increase their earnings and break the cycle of poverty. These outcomes meet the following TANF goal:

- End the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation and work.

6.0 Implementation Date

The implementation date of this Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Block Grant renewal plan is October 1, 2015. It may be updated periodically with amendments during the next three year period.

CERTIFICATIONS

South Carolina will operate a program to provide Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) so that the children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives; to end dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage; to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing the incidence of these pregnancies; and encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

This program is known as: **The Family Independence Program**

Executive Officer of the State: **Nikki Haley, Governor**

State Director, Department of Social Services: **V. Susan Alford**

In administering and operating a program that provides Temporary Assistance for Needy Families with minor children under Title IV-A of the Social Security Act, the State will:

1. Specify which State agency or agencies will administer and supervise the program under Part A in all political subdivisions of the State:
The South Carolina Department of Social Services is the agency responsible for administering the program;
2. Assure that local governments and private sector organizations:
 - (a) Have been consulted regarding the plan and design of welfare services in the State so that services are provided in a manner appropriate to local populations; and
 - (b) Have had at least 45 days to submit comments on the plan and the design of such services.
3. Operate a Child Support Enforcement Program under the State Plan approved under part D;
4. Operate a Foster Care and Adoption Assistance Program in accordance with part E, and certify that the State will take all necessary actions to ensure that children receiving assistance are eligible for medical assistance;
5. Provide each member of an Indian tribe, who is domiciled in the State and is not eligible for assistance under a Tribal Family Assistance plan approved under Section 412, with equitable access to assistance under the State program funded under this part attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government.
6. Establish and enforce standards and procedures to ensure against program fraud and abuse, including standards and procedures concerning nepotism,

conflicts of interest among individuals responsible for the administration and supervision of the State program, kickbacks, and the use of political patronage.

7. On November 21, 1996, the Governor of South Carolina notified the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, consistent with section 407(e)(2), Part A, Title IV of the Social Security Act, that the State was opting out of the provision of requiring a parent or caretaker relative receiving assistance, who after receiving assistance for two months is not exempt from work requirements and is not engaged in work, to participate in community service employment for a minimum number of hours per week.
8. Make available to the public a summary of the plan.

Optional Certification:

- ☐ The State does not elect this option
- ☒ The State has established and is enforcing standards and procedures to:

- (1) Screen and identify individuals receiving assistance under this part with a history of domestic violence while maintaining the confidentiality of such individuals;
- (2) Refer such individuals to counseling and supportive services; and
- (3) Waive, pursuant to a determination of good cause, other program requirements such as time limits (for as long as necessary) for individuals receiving assistance, residency requirements, child support cooperation requirements, and family cap provisions, in cases where compliance with such requirements would make it more difficult for individuals receiving assistance under this part to escape domestic violence or unfairly penalize such individuals who are or have been victimized by such violence, or individuals who are at risk of further domestic violence.

CERTIFIED BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF SOUTH CAROLINA:

Date

Nikki Haley
Governor

FUNDING

Section 403(a)(1)(A) provides that each eligible State shall be entitled to receive for each of the fiscal years beginning in 1996, a grant in an amount equal to the State family assistance grant as defined in section 403(a)(1)(B).

I. Payments to Agency Administering the TANF Program

Payments for the TANF program will be made to the organization managing the AFDC/JOBS programs as of August 22, 1996, unless the State indicates that the TANF administering agency is changed. If a change is made, describe the name, address and EIN number of the new organization. Funding will continue at its current level as is consistent with the continuing resolution of the TANF Program as passed by Congress.

II. State Payments for TANF Program

Section 405 requires that grants be paid to States in quarterly installments, based on State estimates. The State's estimate for each quarter of the fiscal year by percentage is:

For FY 2011 and Future Years

<u>First Quarter</u>	<u>Second Quarter</u>	<u>Third Quarter</u>	<u>Fourth Quarter</u>
<u>25</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>25</u>

Attachment A

Need Standard Table for Family Independence

Effective October 2015

Number in Benefit Group	Gross Income Limit (185% of Need)	Need Standard (50% of Poverty)	Payment Standard (33.72% of Need with no income)
1	906	\$490	165
2	1226	\$663	223
3	1548	\$837	282
4	1868	\$1010	340
5	2188	\$1183	398
6	2510	\$1357	457
7	2830	\$1530	515
8	3150	\$1703	574

NOTE: For family sizes over 8, \$173 is added to the Need Standard for each additional person.
To determine Gross Income, multiply the Need Standard by 1.85 and drop the cents.
To determine Payment Standard/Award, multiply the Need Standard by .3372 and drop the cents.